

# Completing the Violence/Aggression Assessment Checklist (VAAC) for Emergency Departments(ED) or Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Background

Violence or harassment in the workplace is an issue that can touch all business sectors and occupations. Customers, clients, patients, friends, family members, or other workers may assault workers while they are working. Employers need to prevent and control workplace violence, whenever it may occur. In Ontario, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* requires employers to assess the risks of workplace violence and to put in place policies and programs regarding workplace violence and workplace harassment. This Violence/Aggression Assessment Checklist has been developed by PSHSA with assistance from the Central East LHIN and is based on the Broset Violence Checklist (BVC). It has been concluded that the BVC is a useful instrument in predicting violence within the next 24-hour period. (Almvik, Woods & Rasmussen; 2000)

Assessing the risk of violence to self, others, or property is an important aspect of health practice. When these forms of violence occur they have the potential to impact both the clinical staff and the health environment. Predicting the risk of inpatient violence has been extensively researched with equivocal results. One important area of current research is the identification of variables associated with the short-term prediction of violence risk in health settings. This is of considerable interest to nursing staff who, through their daily patient contact, are undoubtedly the most at risk for inpatient violence. Furthermore, it follows that because nursing staff are in close daily contact with patients, that they may be in the best position to observe patient behaviour and predict imminent violence. (Woods, P. et al; 2008)

**To access the tool, visit SASWH Violence website Resource tab.**

**To watch a webcast on how to use the tool – [click here](#)**

## Emergency Department

### ED Process

- Assess all patients at triage for behaviours/ history of violence.
- Complete the checklist by documenting which, if any behaviours are present
- Determine Score of Low, Moderate or High using the table below
- Implement interventions based on your organizational policies and procedures
- Print the form, sign and attach to patient record

(Note: this assessment can also be added to the electronic triage form- similar to the FRI screening process)

**SAMPLE interventions** for organizational procedures:

If Risk of violence is **moderate**:

- Add ☑Alert ☑ Flag to chart/Tracker
- Notify Charge RN
- Contact Security @----- ☑ potential risk of violence☑
- Notify Registration and receiving Zone RNs
- Reassess behaviour and document triggers

Risk of violence is **high**:

- Add ☑ alert☑ Flag to chart/ Tracker
- Contact Security @ ----- . Request Security Presence
- Call 911 If behaviour escalates
- Notify Charge RN
- Triage to Seclusion Room, room with closed circuit surveillance or direct observation

from nursing station

- Provide frequent communication to patient
- Notify Department Manager/Security/Physician/GEM Nurse/ GPA trained staff/Psychiatric services/all treating staff
- Monitor behaviour frequently (? q 30 minutes) and document triggers
- Consider need for restraints as a last resort( physical and/or chemical)

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## **Emergency Medical Services**

### **EMS Process**

- Assess all patients at initial contact for behaviours/ history of violence.
- Review the checklist for any behaviours that may be present
- Determine Score of Low, Moderate or High
- Implement interventions based on your organizational policies and procedures and notify receiving facility
- Indicate risk level on ambulance/patient call record

### **SAMPLE interventions: EMS**

No Behaviours - Risk of violence is low, no interventions required.

Risk of violence is **moderate**:

- Tactical communications.
- Consider the need for police assistance
- Consider the need for notification to receiving hospital to provide risk of violence assessment determination.

Risk of violence is **high**:

- Tactical retreat and request police assistance
- Notification to receiving hospital to provide risk of violence assessment determination

NOTE: A **YES** in either of the shaded areas may require incident report submission for consideration of location flag notification to the Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC), if available in your area.

Thank you for using the Violence/Aggression Assessment Checklist provided to you by the Public Services Health and Safety Association.

<https://www.saswh.ca>